

for 25 and 50 years. Their dedication should be commended.

The Joliet Federation of Musicians Local 37 is a strong organization that has greatly benefited and enlightened our community.

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO TRANSFER CERTAIN FACILITIES OF THE MINIDOKA PROJECT TO THE BURLEY IRRIGATION DISTRICT AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

HON. MICHAEL D. CRAPO

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 1997

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. Speaker, I'm introducing this bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to transfer certain facilities at the Minidoka project to the Burley Irrigation District.

In 1926, under contract with the Bureau of Reclamation, operation and maintenance of the distribution system of the southside pumping division of the Minidoka project was transferred to Burley Irrigation District. The district has operated and maintained the distribution system ever since.

In the early 1950's the main southside canal and certain electrical distribution lines were transferred for operation and maintenance to Burley Irrigation District as well. In addition to those transfers the district agreed, under its contracts, to pay to the United States the construction costs incurred in constructing the project and the Minidoka Dam.

It also agreed to pay its proportionate share of the construction costs of storage facilities in which the irrigation district attained a right to all water stored in the space acquired by the district in the reservoir.

At this time, the Burley Irrigation District has paid in full all construction costs allocated to the district in the storage facilities and all costs incurred in the construction of the distribution system operated and maintained by the district.

For 70 years the Burley Irrigation District has demonstrated its competence in operating and maintaining the facilities proposed for title transfer. Clearly they have the technical capability to meet both their physical and financial obligations.

For these reasons I am introducing this bill to convey title to the Burley Irrigation District, of Federal reclamation distribution facilities.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION

HON. JERRY F. COSTELLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 1997

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Student Health Insurance Portability Protection Act of 1997.

Last year, we made great strides in passing the Kennedy-Kassebaum Health Insurance Portability Protection Act. However, 14.3 million college students covered by health insurance plans sponsored by their college or university are not covered under last year's health provisions. It is essential for college students to fall under these provisions.

My bill requires college-sponsored health plans to be portable and exclude long pre-existing condition waiting periods. College-sponsored plans will be considered as group plans and allow students to go from college-sponsored plans to work-sponsored plans without loss of coverage due to a preexisting condition. Students will also be eligible for another school's health plan when transferring from university to university. This bill takes an important step in ensuring health care coverage for our country's college students at no extra cost to the taxpayer.

I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill and ensuring health care for our Nation's college students. Give them the health care they need to enter the work force. Do not leave college students out of health care reform.

THE TAX FREEDOM RESOLUTION

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 1997

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today, I will introduce the Tax Freedom Resolution to repeal the 16th amendment to the Constitution. This resolution will reverse one of the most destructive amendments to the U.S. Constitution and deny Congress the ability to lay and collect taxes on income.

I believe that the 16th amendment has created a system that is economically destructive, impossibly complex, overly intrusive, unprincipled, dishonest, unfair, and inefficient. Now is the time for us to restore freedom to the American taxpayer.

The tax freedom bill is the first step to do that. It will encourage an open, honest and constructive debate about why our current tax structure has failed and what we expect in a new system.

Why do we need to repeal the 16th amendment? Let me tell you. The current system cannot be fixed. It has already undergone 31 major revisions and 400 minor ones in the past 40 years. And each time the system has become more and more complicated, not less.

The IRS has 480 different tax forms, plus 280 more to explain how to fill out the first 480. The original Tax Code had 11,400 words; today it has 7 million.

Our current system also discourages savings and investment and hampers economic growth. Complying with the Federal Tax Code costs taxpayers more than \$200 billion each year. In 1991, the tax foundation reported that small corporations spent a minimum of \$382 in compliance costs for every \$100 they paid in income taxes.

In addition, several economists have said that replacing the current tax system will cause interest rates to go down and savings and capital investments to increase.

Right now, we have a system that stifles opportunity by picking winners and losers; a system in which Washington decides what is best for the people, instead of letting the people decide what is best for America.

The Federal Government simply takes too much money out of people's pockets. As recently as 1982, Americans paid only 19.90 percent of their income in taxes. New data reveals that in 1995 Americans paid 31.3 per-

cent of their income in taxes: The highest level in history.

By embracing the principles of freedom, we can create a system that is fair and simple that reduces the Federal Bureaucracy, that encourages savings and investment, that is efficient, that drives the economy, that creates opportunity for all, and that puts more money in your pocket.

Fundamental and comprehensive tax reform will be one of the most profound changes this Nation experiences this century. It is time for all of us—whether you support a flat tax, a consumption tax, a value added tax, or a national sales tax—to come together and focus on our one common goal: Replacing the current system. The tax freedom bill gives us the chance to do that and at the same time restore freedom to the American taxpayer.

IN HONOR OF JOHN A. PICA, SR.,
RECIPIENT OF THOMAS
D'ALESSANDRO, JR., GOOD CITI-
ZEN AWARD

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 1997

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute John A. Pica, Sr., the 1997 recipient of the Thomas D'Alesandro, Jr. Good Citizen Award. John Pica exemplifies the spirit in which this award is given. He has devoted every day of his adult life to service of his country and his community, especially the Italian-American community of Baltimore.

Raised in the Little Italy section of Baltimore by Italian immigrant parents, Tony and Maria, John Pica received a bachelor of law degree at Mt. Vernon School of Law and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Baltimore. In addition, he attended the Maryland Institute of Engineering.

In 1943, John enlisted in the Army and served in the 34th Infantry Division. He returned home as the most highly decorated war hero in the State of Maryland, achieving the Silver Star, three Bronze Stars, three Purple Hearts, a Combat Infantry Badge for courage, and the Roll of Honor Award for Distinguished Service.

John Pica also served with distinction as an aide to my father, Mayor Thomas D'Alesandro, Jr. In 1955, when my father was mayor of Baltimore, he appointed John to a vacancy on the Baltimore City Council, where John served until 1967. During his tenure on the council, John was instrumental in passing major legislation of great importance to the community of Baltimore. Among his many legislative accomplishments, John was responsible for securing Social Security and health insurance benefits for city employees and for revising the housing building code, which brought about the reorganization of the Department of Public Works. John continues his public service today by serving on the Maryland Transportation Commission as an advisor to Gov. Parris Glendening.

Mr. Pica's extraordinary professional success has not prevented him from active involvement in his community. His enthusiastic participation in organizations including Italian-American Charities, the Little Italy Lodge, and as cofounder of the Little Italy American Legion, merely solidified the great respect and

affection the community of Little Italy feels for this native son.

Mr. Pica's love, understanding and compassion for others have earned him the loyalty and admiration of many friends. It is said by his friend that if you look up the meaning of the word kindness in the dictionary, you find John Pica. His list of friends have included such names as Truman, Kennedy, Schaefer, Nixon, Reagan, D'Alesandro, McKeldin, and Schmoke.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to salute John Pica for the honor he has brought to the Italian-American community by his many accomplishments and commitment. He deserves this award for the contributions he has made in the spirit and tradition of its namesake, Thomas D'Alesandro.

MEDICARE MEDICALLY NECESSARY DENTAL CARE ACT

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 1997

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce today, along with Congressmen CARDIN and STARK, the Medicare Medically Necessary Dental Care Act. This bill will improve health care for thousands of senior citizens and save the Nation millions of dollars in Medicare costs.

Under current law, Medicare cannot pay for outpatient dental work. However, untreated dental problems can lead to expensive complications when other unrelated procedures are performed. The failure to treat these conditions has both a high cost in suffering for seniors and a high price tag for Medicare.

The Medically Necessary Dental Care Act would permit Medicare to pay for dental care when it is necessary to prevent complications in valvular heart disease, cancer of the head or neck, lymphoma, leukemia, and organ transplants. While expanding dental coverage in these areas is estimated to cost nearly \$17 million, the act would save Medicare about \$117 million by preventing further complications. The bill would also give the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services the authority to expand coverage of medically necessary oral health care in connection with other medical problems if the Health Care Finance Administration determines that the dental coverage will result in cost savings to Medicare.

Take the case of Alma, a senior citizen in Baltimore who underwent a heart valve replacement surgery. Not long ago, she went to the University of Maryland medical system emergency room with a racing heart, fever, chills, and pain in her mouth. Alma was diagnosed with an acute abscess over her upper front teeth which had led to a systemwide infection. She was hospitalized, and will have to undergo 6 weeks of intravenous antibiotics to knock out the infection. In addition, she will probably have to have her heart valves replaced again.

In many ways, Alma is lucky. Dental infection is a common cause of complications in heart valve replacement patients, and some die before their infection can be stabilized. Medicare covered the cost of Alma's hospitalization, and will pay the \$20,000 to

\$40,000 bill if her heart valves have to be replaced again. But all of this could have been avoided by a simple dental checkup and treatment before her first surgery.

A few years ago, James, another Maryland senior, was diagnosed with neck cancer and treated with radiation therapy to his head and neck. Over time, James started to feel pain in his lower jaw, and to have difficulty opening his mouth. His doctor diagnosed a jaw fracture, caused by radiation-related complications of previously infected teeth. To cure the problem, James underwent three surgeries, including removal of a portion of his jaw and a hip graft to replace it. Removal of James's infected teeth before radiation would have cost less than \$300, but Medicare covered the actual cost of \$27,950.

This bill is supported by the American Association of Hospital Dentists, the American Society for Geriatric Dentistry, the Academy of Dentistry for Persons With Disabilities, the American Association of Dental Research, the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, the American Association of Dental Schools, and the American Association of Public Health Dentistry. More importantly, it will save taxpayers millions, while improving the quality of life for senior citizens. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

DETERIORATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN BELARUS

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 1997

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, over the last year, we have witnessed a steady deterioration in the human rights situation in Belarus. Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka has flouted international commitments by infringing on the human rights of the citizens of Belarus. He has violated elementary human rights and freedoms, such as freedom of speech, assembly and association, and has stifled democracy by clamping down on the media, on the democratic opposition, and on fledgling nongovernmental organizations. Lukashenka has amassed near-dictatorial powers, using an illegitimate constitutional referendum held last November to extend his power, disbanding the Parliament and creating a new legislature and constitutional court subservient to him.

The international community has widely censured Lukashenka for his blatant disregard for international commitments. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe [OSCE] has repeatedly called upon the Government of Belarus to respect human rights and democratic principles, to enter into dialog with the opposition and to ensure freedom of the media. The chairman in office of the OSCE has stated that neither the preparations for the November 1996 referendum nor the new constitution comply with OSCE norms, principles, and commitments. The OSCE hopes to send a mission to Belarus this month if it receives assurances that the mission can meet with members of the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the human rights situation in Belarus has taken a turn for the worse in recent weeks. Last week, on April 3, the leadership of the Commission on Secu-

rity and Cooperation in Europe—Helsinki Commission—wrote to President Lukashenka expressing our dismay at recent developments in Belarus and urging President Lukashenka to reverse the deterioration of human rights in his country and live up to obligations freely undertaken as an OSCE member.

Mr. Speaker, I request that the letter be included in the RECORD.

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND
COOPERATION IN EUROPE,
Washington, DC, April 3, 1997.

His Excellency ALYAKSANDR LUKASHENKA,
President, Republic of Belarus,
Minsk, Belarus.

DEAR PRESIDENT LUKASHENKA: We are writing to express our heightened concern about the further deterioration in the human rights situation in your country and to protest a series of actions by your government in blatant violation of OSCE principles and norms.

Within the last few weeks, two American citizens, including a U.S. diplomat, have been expelled from Belarus. First Secretary Serge Alexandrov was unjustly and illegally detained and expelled for observing an opposition rally, a routine practice of diplomats. A few days earlier, on March 16, Belarusian Soros Foundation Executive Director Peter G. Byrne was prevented from reentering Belarus, detained, held incommunicado for over 12 hours in flagrant violation of diplomatic and consular conventions in effect between the United States and Belarus, and forcibly expelled the next day. Mr. Byrne ostensibly was expelled for illegal activity, but in reality, was expelled for supporting efforts to develop Belarus' fledgling civil society.

These expulsions come on the heels of other repressive actions, including arrests and beatings of demonstrators who have been protesting your policies over the last few months. Organizers of these rallies, such as former Chairman of Parliament Mechyslau Hryh have received stiff fines or have been arrested and jailed for up to 15 days. We are alarmed by reports of beatings that resulted in injuries and detentions of several hundred protestors and journalist during yesterday's demonstrations in Minsk.

We are deeply concerned about the Belarusian Government's restrictions on the right to freedom of speech and assembly—as manifested by your March 5 decree which also bans the display of Belarusian national symbols at rallies—and the arrest of peaceful protestors, as well as journalists, at a number of these rallies. We are also alarmed by the political intimidation of leading opposition figures, as illustrated by police visits to their homes demanding they admit they violated a presidential edict that restricts demonstrations, and by police searches of various political party headquarters. In February, two opposition leaders were attacked in Minsk in separate incidents by unidentified assailants under suspicious circumstances. Also, we have received reports of the intimidation of university professors and other examples of crude threats by police against democratic activists.

We are especially troubled by the plight of Henadz Karpenka, Deputy Chairman of the 1996 parliament and chair of the opposition shadow cabinet, who was on a hunger strike to protest the special police guard placed outside his ward in a hospital where he is currently a patient.

Another example of apparent intimidation is the March 10 decree calling into question important tax exemptions granted to the Belarusian Soros Foundation and other nongovernmental organizations and the March 18 announcement that all nongovernmental